
THE
Massachusetts
MISSIONARY MAGAZINE.

No. 5.] OCTOBER, 1804. [Vol. II.

ADDRESS TO MARRIED PERSONS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.
GENTLEMEN,

THE following is thought to be very just and pertinent, and calculated to afford very important instruction to inconsiderate youth, as well as to those who have entered the married state.

“THE duties between man and wife are various and important. They suppose not a union of persons only, but also and principally of affections. It is not joining of hands, but of hearts, that constitutes marriage in the sight of God. This alone brings and preserves the sexes together, and both sanctifies, and perfects this most solemn and sacred connexion. But where this is wanting, the mere cohabitation of man and woman, in spite of all the ceremonies in the world, is nothing better than a legal prostitution. The office says, and with great propriety, that, so many as are coupled together otherwise than God’s word doth allow, are not joined together of God, neither is the matrimony lawful.

“See then, that no motives of interest or convenience deceive you into a notion, that you love one another, while you do not. It is not the bare form only of vowing in the most solemn manner at the altar, that can possibly give a sanction to falsehood, or render innocent such mercenary lies.

“Trifle not, I charge you, in this awful instance with the God of nature, truth, your own hearts and your own comfort! She, who gives her hand to the man, whom she does not in fact prefer to the whole world, is almost as worthless to all intents and purposes, as a common prostitute. God never winks

No. 5. Vol. II.

W

at

at the violation of nature, nor suffers it to take place with impunity. But this must be the case in every marriage, where mutual affection is wanting. And that family is uniformly cursed with the most substantial wretchedness, where there subsists no love between the heads of it.

“You, who are husbands, must treat your wives with delicacy and attention. Nothing in nature is so endearing, so winning, so captivating, as tenderness; nothing creates aversion so soon, so strong, so inveterate, as rudeness, indifference, or disrespect. She is the weaker vessel, and depends on you for protection and comfort in all her difficulties. For your sake she has left her friends, her connexions, and all the world; and should she meet with a tyrant instead of a lover, she may repent of this day as long as she lives. Never incense, nor insult her; and as you wish to keep your own temper and peace, never ruffle hers; for crossness and asperity, especially when they settle into moroseness and ill nature, are the qualities of a savage, not of a Christian. Never, on any pretence whatever, squander that in dress, drinking, or dissipation, which you should lay by for the benefit of your family. By all the laws of God and man, of justice and love, they have an exclusive claim on whatever you can earn; and every unnecessary indulgence which you take apart from them, is at their expense and injury. Consult your wife, especially on cases of difficulty. It is her interest, as well as duty, to give you the best advice she can. Never keep her ignorant of your circumstances. This has been the undoing of millions of families. The wife, who deserves the name, will never fail to economize when she knows, that her partner’s circumstances require it. Be not much uneasy, though the world should sometimes think, she has her full share of influence. Women of good sense seldom abuse their husband’s confidence. And you will see few happy families, in which the wife is either a slave or a cypher.

“Mutual happiness is your mutual object; yield therefore to one another. “Be ye equally yoked,” is the command of God; suffer no interference from any quarter to interrupt your harmony. You are connected for life. Nothing can separate your fate in this world; let nothing divide your affections. Regard each other with the fullest confidence; the least spark of suspicion from either will blast the comfort of both. There can be no harmony where there is no faith.

“A wife should not only love her husband, but on every occasion show him all the attention in her power. Study by every mean to make his home comfortable and inviting. A man’s presence, as well as his heart, will be where he has the most pleasure. I will venture to assert it, as a fact incontrovertible, that he, who finds his home a paradise, will seldom stroll into the wilderness of the world. In

"In a word, be habitually kind and loving to one another. Have no separate secrets, nor allow yourselves any airs of mystery; but open your whole hearts to each other. Conceal as much as possible one another's foibles, and cultivate habits of affability, forbearance, and good nature. Never be fullen, or in a pet with each other, especially in the presence of strangers. Finally, love and live together as heirs of glory; and may the richest blessings of Almighty God be your mutual portion, both in this world and in the next.

FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.

LETTERS

From ADELPHUS to EUSEBIA on modern, fashionable Amusements.

(Continued from page 141, vol. ii.)

LETTER IV.

DEAR SISTER,

IN my last, I endeavoured to shew the unlawfulness of modern amusements from the nature and requirements of the religion of Jesus. Religion is benevolence to all beings in due proportion to their apparent worth. It is inconsistent, therefore, with all selfish desires and pursuits. This benevolence, or, as the scriptures beautifully express it, "bond of perfectness," inspires all, who possess it, "with a spirit of unfeigned obedience to the requirements of religion. "If ye love me," says Christ, "keep my commandments." But if you indulge in the self-gratifying pleasures of the young, how can you obey the divine command, "deny thyself and take thy cross?" How can you comply with the solemn exhortations to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling;" to "fight the good fight of faith;" to "watch unto prayer;" to "flee youthful lusts;" to "abstain from the appearance of evil;" to avoid trifling irreligious company? How is a participation in such amusements consistent with the tender solicitude, which you ought to exercise for the eternal happiness of your thoughtless companions, or with the divine prohibition to "put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall, in the way of any?" Is there so little difference between fleeting time, and vast eternity, that you can think proper to disobey the injunction, "make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof?" In short, is it not sufficiently evident, that the diversions at this day so fashionable, are, in their nature and design, utterly opposed to the spirit of the gospel? The gospel is a scheme of pure love;
love

love to infinite excellence, and whatever opposes it must be wrong.

If you keep in mind, that the criminality of amusements does not essentially consist in their accidental circumstances, but in their nature, you can easily see the impropriety of your resolution to *almost* abandon them. Such a resolution you found upon the presumption, that amusements are wrong only when carried to excess. But you have no good reason to make this supposition. If my former observations prove any thing, they prove, that such amusements are *really* wrong, or in other words, that they are not criminal because carried to excess, but because they are, in every degree, contrary to the commands of Christ. Some people advocate one kind of amusements, some another. Some would allow them only to the young, others would confine them to no particular age. Some would indulge in them daily, some weekly, and others less frequently. Some entirely neglect them through constitutional indifference, or bodily infirmity. Others detest them on account of their attendant expense. They all join to reproach each other for their respective notions and peculiarities. What one thinks excessive, another thinks temperate. What one esteems polite and decent, another reprobates, as indecent and vulgar. But the truth is, there is no essential difference between them. They are not opposed to amusements from a fear of violating the divine commands. Would their private interest permit, they would all go to the same excess of riot. Self-gratification being their object, whatever be their amusements, they are altogether inexcusable. If you have any regard, therefore, for the commands of Christ, cease to frequent scenes of amusement. If you feel any respect for the solemn injunctions of scripture, cease to pervert any part of the sacred pages to encourage worldly pleasure, or to strengthen the confidence, and confirm the delusions of those, who mind earthly things.

How highly criminal must it be for parents to encourage or allow their children in the practice of amusements! The young, destitute of experience and without consideration, surrounded with temptations and incited by passions, as much need a guide, as a ship on the boisterous ocean needs a helm. Divine Providence has wisely constituted parents the directors of their children's conduct. If parents, instead of leading their children in the path of rectitude, permit them to follow their own chosen way, and indulge in what are improperly called innocent pleasures, do they not justly fall under the charge of unfaithfulness to a most solemn trust? Many carry their cruel and destructive insensibility so far as to prefer scenes of dissipation and amusement for the resort of their youth under the mistaken notion of their

their necessity to form good manners. May the heart of the fathers be turned to the children.

Even some of the professed ministers of Christ, with sorrow be it spoken, are the advocates for amusements. Others seem to think them a matter of indifference, or at most, an evil, which may patiently be born. But how are such principles consistent with the self-denying religion of Jesus? How can the servants of Christ espouse sentiments, and advocate conduct, subversive of the gospel? Is it because the gospel is supposed to require less now, than formerly? or is it because they are———but I forbear.—“Tell it not in Gath.”—

I have now made what observations I had proposed. You have my opinion, with some of the reasons to support it. Whether these reasons will prove sufficient to convince you I know not. Or rather, I may say, whether you will be persuaded to act from conviction is uncertain. For I must suppose, Pres. Edwards' excellent sermons on this subject and Mr. Newton's letter were abundantly sufficient to shew the impropriety of amusements. But after all, to what shall I persuade you? to abandon amusements? Rather let me entreat you to become a Christian. You will then be willing to comply with your duty, which now seems disagreeable. You will then have no desire to be among the enemies and despisers of Christ. You will then contemplate the conduct of your giddy companions with sorrow. And till you become a humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, you stand in imminent danger. All your conduct must appear highly wicked in the eyes of infinite holiness, while you oppose the divine law and reject the gospel. Be entreated then to be reconciled to God, and become an heiress to an inheritance incorruptible in heaven.

ADELPHUS.

Massachusetts, May 13, 1804.

THE WICKED DISPLEASED WITH THE GOSPEL.

(Concluded from p. 138.)

IN the view of the preceding observations, we may easily account for the barbarous treatment which our divine Redeemer received from the world, during his incarnation. They were continually reprov'd and condemn'd both by his preaching and example. These constituted a light, whose piercing beams they could not endure—a light, which discover'd to them their own hearts, and produced self-condemnation. Our Lord constantly required those things of sinners for which they had no taste, and represented their everlasting punishment

as

as absolutely certain, if they did not relinquish their attachment to this world and cordially comply with the requisitions of the gospel. "If any man would be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. He that forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple." These things they could not endure; they were absolutely insupportable. And for no other crime, than because he thus plainly and pointedly told them the truth, he finally fell a victim to their relentless fury. Nor, considering the total incongruity between their character and the doctrines which he taught, is their treatment towards him surprising. Nor, since human nature is radically the same in all ages of the world, is it strange that so many of mankind at the present day reprobate and reject those ministers of the gospel whose doctrines harmonize with those of their Divine Lord and Master. How is it possible that the wicked should be willing to hear the doctrine of total depravity? This doctrine strips them of all right affection, and represents them as enemies to God, enemies to Christ, enemies to justice, enemies to mercy, enemies to men, enemies to saints in heaven and saints on earth, and to every other intelligent being in the universe. It condemns every exercise of their hearts, and every action of their lives. It declares, in the most solemn manner, that they are every moment deserving of and exposed to everlasting burnings; and that so long as they remain unreconciled to the gospel, they are constantly accumulating guilt, "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil."—This being the nature, and these the consequences, of the doctrine now under consideration, is it strange that the wicked are unwilling to hear it? As well may the criminal at the bar be pleased with evidence produced to condemn him, as the wicked approve of the doctrine of total depravity. Notwithstanding they are the very persons who reduce this doctrine to practice, yet they are unwilling to hear it preached, and to be reminded of the tremendous consequences with which it is connected.

Nor is the doctrine of disinterested benevolence less painful and insupportable. Christ and Belial may as well harmonize, as the wicked be pleased with this doctrine. To comply with it, is far more painful, than to cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye.

And how is it possible that those of whom we are now speaking should approve of the doctrine of divine sovereignty? This doctrine represents them as being in the most absolute sense dependent on the sovereign will of Jehovah, and is so far from being capable of pleasing, that it is directly calculated to mortify their
pride

pride, and awaken the enmity and opposition of their hearts.—The reason and conscience of wicked men, as has been previously observed, testify to the truth of these doctrines, but their hearts do not approve of them. And no impenitent sinner, unless he is awfully stupid, will remain easy, under such preaching. In finding fault with these things, the wicked act consistently with their own characters.

Nor considering the total contrariety between the hearts of the wicked and that temper which the gospel requires, is it strange that the church has been subjected to such frequent and violent persecutions, and so much been said and done to discourage the progress of Christianity and exterminate it from the world. When pride shall harmonize with humility, hatred with love, enmity with friendship, and selfishness with benevolence; in a word, when there shall be no specific difference between the principles of righteousness and unrighteousness, and when supreme love to the things of the world shall qualify men for the enjoyments of heaven, then, and not before, will the wicked be pleased with the gospel of Christ.—The preceding essay suggests the following remarks.

1. It is evident that Divine Providence has interposed in preserving the holy scriptures. We have endeavoured to prove that mankind, by nature, are displeased with and opposed to them. This opposition they have manifested in a great variety of ways. They have not only omitted to comply with the reasonable and gracious requirements of the gospel, but many have openly rejected and taken all possible pains to bring it into contempt, and prevent the world from believing it. Among the almost countless number of books extant, no one has received the thousandth part so much opposition as the Bible. It has been assaulted by the united powers of earth and hell, and its total destruction ardently wished and sought; but sought in vain. It has survived the rage of its most malignant opposers, and still lives. It is more than seventeen hundred years since the New Testament was written, and the antiquity of the Old is much greater. Indeed some parts of the holy scriptures are more ancient than any writings extant. And they have not only been transmitted down unadulterated to the present day, but they have been believed, and adhered to, by a respectable number, in every age. And it is worthy of observation, that this influence has never been extended by coercive means. In this respect the progress of *pure Christianity* has widely differed from the religion of Mahomet. The latter has extended but little further, than it has been carried by force. But the former has lived, and prevailed, amidst the most violent persecutions. These things considered, is it not very evident that Divine Providence has interposed in preserving the holy scriptures?

Since

Since mankind are, naturally, so displeased with and opposed to them, we have good reason to believe that they would have been totally obliterated ages ago, had not preternatural wisdom and power prevented. Hence we are under solemn obligation to be particularly grateful, not only for the gift of the holy scriptures, but for their preservation.

2. From the preceding observations we infer, that the gospel is not a cunningly devised fable, but a system of divine truth. Since the human heart is so displeased with, and opposed to the gospel, we have sufficient evidence to conclude that it was not written by wicked men. It is perfectly unnatural and unreasonable to suppose, that wicked men would invent a book to condemn themselves, in which all possible arguments are used to discountenance vice. To suppose this, is the same, as to suppose that Satan is divided against himself, and using means to suppress the prevalence of infidelity and wickedness, when at the same time their promotion constitutes the great object of his pursuit. Such a supposition involves the grossest absurdity. Not a single argument, which has the least appearance of probability, can be used to support the hypothesis, that the Bible was written by *wicked men*. And it is very certain it was not written by *good men*, unless it is true. Good men would not be disposed to write such a system as the Bible contains, and assert that they wrote by divine inspiration, when they knew the assertion to be false. To suppose that good men would be guilty of such a falsehood is no less unnatural than to suppose that the Bible was written by wicked men. Either supposition involves too gross an absurdity to find a place in the creed of any candid, impartial man. Hence we are led to conclude that the gospel is not a forgery, not a cunningly devised fable, as some have pretended, but a system of divine truth.

Hence we remark, 3. That the gospel demands our most serious consideration, and unlimited confidence. It is an infallible rule of faith and practice, and able to make us wise unto salvation.

4. Those who are displeased with, and opposed to the gospel, may easily infer their opposition to the character of that God by whom it was revealed. Since the gospel claims a divine original, there is no disagreement between the doctrines and precepts contained in it, and the character of its Author; hence those, who are displeased with the former, must be equally displeased with the latter. No man can be an enemy to the gospel, and a friend to the God of nature. Enmity to the latter stands inseparably connected with enmity to the former.

5. We cannot but notice the awfully criminal and hazardous situation in which all Deists are involved. In their attempts to

to overthrow the gospel, they have waged war with Heaven. They have drawn the sword against Jehovah, and challenged Omnipotence to the combat. They have had the boldness to charge infinite veracity with falsehood. "But vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." We are willing to have infidels of every description in his hands, believing that he is able to take care of his own cause. He has not, nor ever will, suffer the gates of hell to prevail against his church. He is able to defeat the designs of all his enemies, and to overrule them to the furtherance of his own purposes. But while he will make infidelity, and all kinds of wickedness an occasion of good, their patrons will be clothed with disappointment, shame and disgrace. Living and dying unbelievers in the truth of the gospel, there is no possibility of their salvation. For there is no other way nor name given under heaven by which we can be saved, but by that Saviour whom the gospel reveals. "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? Whosoever denieth the Father, the same hath not the Son." To the same purpose said the Saviour himself, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

6. The preceding observations suggest one certain consequence of regeneration; and that is, a cordial approbation of the gospel. Since mankind, while in a state of impenitency, are displeased with and opposed to the gospel, it follows, that they will approve of it, the moment their hearts are changed. It will then appear as beautiful and glorious, as before it did hateful. For, notwithstanding "every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reproved; yet he that doth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." Nothing but that radical change of heart, which is implied in regeneration, is necessary to establish the most incorrigible infidel in the belief, that the gospel contains a system of divine truth, and to reconcile him to all its doctrines and precepts. The language of every new born soul is, "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day; it is sweeter than honey, yea sweeter than the honey comb." *Such*, "as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby." Hence, here is a rule of trial by which we may determine our own character. Do we possess a firm unshaken belief that the gospel is divinely true? Are we pleased with its doctrines and precepts, and do we reduce them to practice? If not, we are but practising delusion to call ourselves Christians.

HORATIO.

MRS. OSBORN'S LETTER.

(Continued from page 166.)

THOUGH grace is not always alike in exercise (no, I am sometimes dull and lifeless as to exercise) yet, blessed be God, it has been the habitual and settled bent of my soul for many years, to choose God, his Christ, and grace, for my portion in all conditions, both adverse and prosperous. Blessed be God, my faith has not been staggered. Sometimes he has bereaved, cut off the streams of earthly comfort, one after another; and then caused me to justify him, and fly to him as my all. Sometimes he has hid his face, and caused me to mourn after him, and refuse all comfort till he returned. Sometimes he has permitted Satan to tempt and tyrannize over me for a season; and many a precious jewel has been stolen from me by clouding my evidences, and insinuating that all was delusion and hypocrisy; and how many distressing gloomy days I have had God only knows: but Satan could not keep them; for a faithful God would not suffer me to be tempted above that I was able, but made way for my escape.

Sometimes he has permitted the remains of indwelling corruption to rally all its force, and strive for mastery; but at the same time stirred up an inveterate hatred and an abhorrence of it, and myself for it, because 'tis the abominable thing his soul hates. And sometimes unbelief has so far prevailed, that I have cried out, *I shall one day perish by the hands of these enemies*, or I shall at least fall foully to the dishonour of the dear name by which I am called, if not finally; but for more than sixteen years has God preserved me from open scandalous sins; (yea, blessed be God, through restraining grace, all my life long) and from ever making a league with sin, since I have through grace proclaimed war with it: and by grace assisting I am determined never to lay down my arms, but to fight till I die, under the banner of the great Captain of my salvation: yea, and truth and veracity itself has said, *sin shall not have dominion over you, and my grace shall be sufficient for you*.—And here (my Dear) my great strength lies: for *all the promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus*: and since my Lord is mine, all is mine, and I shall come off more than a conqueror, through him that has loved me and given himself for me, though now I groan under a body of sin and death; and may I never cease to mourn, but daily look on him whom I have pierced; *oh it was sin, my sin*, that pierced his sacred head and side, that put all the bitter ingredients into the cup, that extorted that heart-piercing cry from him, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And never does it appear more odious, than when I am well satisfied it never will prove
my

my ruin. God disposes me to choose any affliction, or all the afflictions in this world, rather than sin. I do esteem it the worst of evils; yea, I had rather have all the furies of hell let loose to perplex me, than to be given over to the tyranny of my own inbred lusts and corruptions. O, thanks be to God, he has said, *I will subdue your iniquities!* Oh how sweet here to consider Christ as my king, that will ere long set his foot on the necks of these enemies! how sweet to espouse his cause!—bring forth the traitors, and entreat him to slay every one that says they will not have him to reign over them! Oh that Christ would entirely possess his rightful throne in my soul, wholly sway the sceptre there, fill every room; that not a lust, an usurper, might ever dare to lift up its venomous head again! O transporting thought; one everlasting day this shall be the happy case!

Again; God causes me to love his image wherever I see it; in strangers, in rich, in poor, in bond or free, of what denomination soever. Surely I do esteem the saints, the excellent of the earth, and they are my delight. Again, God enables me to love my enemies, to forgive injuries, and earnestly to pray that God would forgive them also. But I must not enumerate more.

These, my dear Friend, are what I call evidences of a work of grace: and for my part I had rather be able to read them, than to hear a voice from heaven, telling me I am a child of God. If you ask again, if I can always, or of myself, read them to my satisfaction? I answer, without Christ I can do nothing; I am not sufficient for one good thought; all my sufficiency is of God: but God has taught me to live more by faith, and less by sense, than I used to do; and therefore if he hide his face, I do not immediately raze foundations as formerly, and draw up hard conclusions against myself: but having treasured up the experiences of many years, I repair to them in a dark and cloudy day, and find thus and thus God has done for me, and appeared for my help in times past: and this as an anchor holds me sure, and he will in his own time return, and revive me; he has begun that good work in me, that he will carry on till the day of Jesus; he was the author, and he will be the finisher of my faith: and so he makes me hang on the faithfulness of a covenant God, who will not deceive nor make any ashamed of their hope, that put their trust in him.

And now, my dear, dear Friend, I have given you the reason of the hope that is in me: and judge you, are these all the effects of nature, gifts, imagination, or a common work of the Spirit? Will any or all of these latter thus determine the soul for God? Will they enamour the soul with his beauty, because holy, just, faithful, powerful, &c. and make it even break with longings

longings after a conformity to him? Will they cause it to cry out, *whom have I in heaven but thee!* and make it rejoice—because even the brightest seraph nor all the angelic hosts shall ever be able to divert it one moment throughout eternity from God, but he shall be all in all, the heaven of heaven itself? Will nature abhor and dread hypocrisy, and always cause the soul, when it has any sense of divine things, to tremble at the very thought of it, and earnestly to plead with God to search and try it, if there is any guile, or reservation, or any false way in it? Yea, will nature lay the soul open, and cause it to plead with God that his all-piercing eye may penetrate into the most secret recesses? Yea, and rejoice that it does so? Will nature welcome death, the king of terrors, purely because it will deliver the soul from sin, and usher it into the presence of God, when no outward difficulties make it desire death, but God in his providence makes things comfortable and easy? Again, will nature cause all things below to appear very vanity, and less than nothing, compared with communion with God, even here; and cause it to deprecate and tremble at the thought of any unsanctified prosperity; and absolutely to refuse accepting of any or all creature comforts, as any part of its portion, or in the room of one degree of sanctifying grace? May not the soul in this case say, *there is none upon earth I desire besides thee*; ordinances and providences are all empty without thee; and I will not let thee go, I will not be comforted, except thou comfort me? Yea, though thou slay me, I will trust in thee, by grace assisting: and leaving the things that are behind, I am determined to press after as great discoveries of Christ, and degrees of sanctification, as it is possible for a mortal finite creature to attain in this imperfect state; since grace is absolutely free and sovereign, and not bestowed for any worth or worthiness in the object, but for Jesus' sake alone.

Surely this is a work of almighty power, and victorious grace! May God have all the glory! But methinks I see you wondering that I attempt to write in so positive a strain; and withal, your tender heart misgives you, and you fear lest I am influenced by self-confidence, pride, ostentation, or vain glory; and would to God I dare tell you that I had no remains of these odious sins in me; but doubtless cleave they will, to my best performances, as long as I live in this world. However, I trust, through grace, *that* is not the motive which has constrained me thus freely to communicate my experiences to you. No, but to vindicate the honour and glory of the great GOD, whom Satan has dared to slander, and reproach with his lies: to bear a testimony for God, that I know him to be truth and faithfulness in the abstract, and far to exceed all that I could ever ask or think; and again to declare, that had I a thousand precious souls,

souls, I would venture them all on his truth and veracity, and cling to him : I will, in defiance of Satan and all his combined legions, so long as God holds me by the bonds of his Spirit. When God himself rends my hope from me, I will let it go, but not till then : and if it is the hope of the hypocrite, may it go this moment ! And well may I say, so long as God holds me : for I know assuredly, it is by grace, and grace only, I stand.—For so vile am I of myself, that should he with-hold it I should wander from him as far as hell itself, notwithstanding all he has done for me.—Whereof then have I to boast ? Oh, blessed be God, boasting is forever excluded ! Oh may the crown be set on Jesus' head ; while I lay my mouth in the dust, and acknowledge I am an unprofitable servant, and utterly unworthy of all the mercy he has shewed to me.

I entreat you not to conclude, from what I have written, that I have any desire to establish assurance as the essence of saving faith ; or to set up my experiences as a standard. No, no, far be that from me. I know God by his Spirit works variously with his children. But as to the essential and fundamental parts, I trust you will find them agreeable to the scripture. Try them by that ; to the law and to the testimony ; if they agree not with *that*, reject them immediately, as false, delusive, imaginary, and having no light in them. But if you find they are genuine characters of a saving work wrought by almighty power in the soul ; discern, I pray thee, whose signet, bracelets and staff, are these. Can you not lay a claim to them, and say, surely God has done thus and thus for me also ? Or if you dare not lay claim, dare you deny, dare you say, God has not convinced you of sin, and your absolute need of a SAVIOUR ? Has he not determined you for himself ? Do you not choose him for your everlasting portion ? Do not for a world say you do not : I trust you dare not say so. Well, if you ever have CHOSEN God for your all, renew your choice, fly to him again, give up yourself, and all your vast concerns, into his hands, through the Mediator ; and I doubt not but you will derive strength from the head of all gracious influences. Oh, say not, you cannot : but try to stretch forth the withered hand, and it will be whole ! Oh touch but the hem of his garment, and all shall be well ! Oh lay your impotent needy soul by the pool, and I trust the angel of the everlasting covenant will ere long descend, and make you whole, and restore to you the joys of his salvation ! And thus perhaps you will see, though now they are clouded, that you have the evidences of grace in you ; that you do hate sin as sin ; that you do love holiness for its own sake, and God, because an holy God ; that you love his law, and long perfectly to obey ; that you do prize Christ as a King, as well as Saviour ; that you do love his image in his children ; that you do

do love your enemies ; and are weaned from this world, and all its trifling enjoyments ; that you are reaching after greater degrees of sanctifying grace.

I know you will forgive me, if I intrude on your patience in this long epistle, and all my freedoms herein ; since it proceeds from a heart full of tender concern for you, and wanted vent. Oh may God refresh you by it, and lift up the light of his countenance upon you ! And I beg you, pray for me, that I enter not into temptation : for though I have for some time, through surprising grace, walked up and down in the light of God's countenance, I am yet in my enemy's country ; a thousand snares await me from within and without ; I have not yet put off the harness, and perhaps comparatively but girding it on ; and though the house built upon the rock, Christ Jesus, fall not, yet I have no expectation but that the rain will descend, the floods come, the winds blow, and beat upon it.—Oh pray that I may glorify God, in every condition and state of life, and all is well.

This long letter, my dear Friend, I commit to your care and prudence, as the very secrets of my soul, and as a token of my sincere affection and esteem for you, as my very dear, dear friend : which pray accept with hearty regards to you, and all dear to you.—Pray write to me as soon as you can.—*Your's heartily.*

LETTERS ON SOLITARY DEVOTION.

(Continued from page 144.)

FROM *PASCAL* TO *JULIA*.

LETTER XX.

I Sympathise with you deeply, my dear Julia, under your continued dejection of mind. God still hides his face, and you are troubled. Indeed it is afflictive, to feel as though one were shut out from his presence ; and were finally denied that sweet, and feeling access, which at some antecedent moments have been enjoyed. Under such soul trouble what can be more suitable for us, than to say submissively, “ I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me ; he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.” I am glad to find that as you cannot entirely relinquish your hope, you appear resolved, having resumed, to persevere in what appears so evidently

evidently your duty. Your spiritual wants impose upon you the necessity of this course. You have no other alternative. Prayer, however little comfort is mixed with it, in seasons of desertion, is our only relief. Despond not. The Lion of the tribe of Judah will prevail. He says to us, "Ye shall weep, and lament, but the world shall rejoice, and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come, but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." These words have often given me great consolation. I hope they will be made, my dear sister, consoling to you. Having but a moment to write, I must break off abruptly, and am yours, &c.

LETTER XXI.

YOUR last, my dear Julia, brings to my recollection an impressive observation of Job, "Therefore am I troubled at his presence; when I consider, I am afraid of him." You say that you feel painfully sunk with overwhelming views of your guilt; that at times you have such apprehensions of the unlimited glory of the great Jehovah, and of your own guilt, and particularly in a review of your late backsliding, that you hardly dare attempt to pray to him." You now seem to be shot at with another arrow from the quiver of the great enemy of your soul. Now he is endeavouring to drive you from your duty by the fear of performing it. But yield not to his suggestions. The sense you have of your guilt, whatsoever trembling of soul it may involve, may be salutary. It is no evidence of your spiritual blindness. It is no improper attendant upon the duty of prayer. It does not argue any present unfitness for this exercise. A person may have a deep conviction of sin to be sure, without any humility of heart. But generally it indicates that the heart is savingly humbled. Seldom probably is there great, and long continued conviction of sin, without repentance. Such a conviction must terminate either in the peace of a broken heart, or in despair. Your dejection of mind is much short of despair, and is consistent with hope. It is consistent with the supposition of your being truly penitent. And should a consciousness of guilt, however great, make you at any time afraid to pray? Should an apprehension of your entire blame-worthiness deter you? Your past comfort has not risen from the idea that your guilt was little, but from a believing apprehension of the infinite fulness there is in Christ. While you have had a sight
of

of this, you could not doubt of the possibility of salvation for the chief of sinners, nor of the certainty of their salvation upon their embracing the gospel. No man is saved because he is a less sinner than other men. The consolations of religion are never enjoyed upon this ground. They who erect their hopes, and become familiar, and confident before the Divine Majesty upon the supposition that they are less criminal than others, because exempt from certain vices and disorders of life, with which others are chargeable, are exactly in the state of the Pharisee. Their hopes are the same. Their language is constructively the same. Their familiarity with God is a presumptuous contempt of his glory. The salvation of the gospel is entirely a scheme of grace. It is not proposed to men upon any other principle. Christ did not come into the world, and die upon the cross, to redeem creatures to whom salvation is possible in some other way. He came to seek and save those who were in themselves absolutely lost. Sinners are not renewed, justified, sanctified, sustained in the Christian struggle, and translated to glory, because their sins are few, and of slight criminality; but rather because they are many, and vastly criminal. If grace is to be illustrated, the greatness of the guilt of those who are saved, is the medium through which the illustration is to be made. Hence this is the very argument which the Psalmist uses to move God to extend mercy to him. "Forgive my iniquity, for it is great." An argument, which, upon the scheme of grace, must be of all others the most successful. Upon the same principle the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, which was designed to instruct us on this subject, represents the accepted Publican, in the posture of the penitent criminal, at the bar of justice, hardly daring to lift his eyes up to heaven, pleading guilty without any reserve, and asking for mercy on the ground of his guilt only. Upon this principle we hear God, in the first chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, having exhibited in very lively colours the enormity of the guilt of the carnal Jews, and directed them to repentance, upon the supposition of their complying with this direction, speaking to them in this moving language, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." In the 57th chapter of this same prophecy the following words are found. "For thus saith the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite one." A declaration perfectly suited to dissipate all our trembling on the ground of the greatness of our guilt, provided we are penitent.

In

In the same tender inviting strain, God declares in Hosea respecting Israel, on the supposition of their becoming sincerely penitent, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from them. I will be as the dew unto Israel. He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." On this ground Paul speaks of himself as having obtained mercy, that he might be a pattern for the full encouragement of all who should afterwards believe. He expressly authorizes all penitent believers to come boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and to find grace to help in the time of need. Thus the language of the scripture throughout is in a strain perfectly encouraging to the humble. It teaches, in the plainest manner, that personal guilt, however great, is no obstacle to the fullest exercise of mercy. It assures us that the penitent are admitted to as free and welcome an access to God, and may rest as sure of acceptance with him, as if they had never transgressed. Notwithstanding all their guilt, they have leave to come with as much familiarity and confidence, as the sinless beings in glory. Why then should the multitude, or the enormity of our sins overwhelm us? Why should they hold us in a state of slavish terror? If indeed we are impenitent; if we remain on friendly terms with sin, so that upon the whole we refuse to forsake it, not a promise in the Bible belongs to us; and we have infinite reason to tremble. This however is not the supposition I am to indulge respecting you. Your letters are crowded with expressions of self-loathing and self-condemnation. Christ is evidently your only refuge. I presume you dare not say that he is not precious to you. Then, I ask, do you treat the infinitude of divine love and grace suitably? Do you honour God as a God of grace? Do you take him at his word? Do you exalt, as you should do, the Divine Redeemer, while the greatness of your guilt is so much of a stumbling-block in your way? Should this operate to dissuade you in the smallest degree from the exercise of prayer? Have you forgotten how express and moving the invitations of the scriptures are to this duty? Have you forgotten how explicit the promises of audience and acceptance are with respect to all prayer? Listen again. How soothingly they fall from the lips of our Redeemer! "Ask, and ye shall receive, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Ask, that your joy may be full. Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." God even condescends to use this extraordinary language, "Command ye me." Are not these invitations and promises addressed to those who are as guilty as you? nay, are they not addressed to you as much as to others? Believe me, this is a stratagem of Satan to weaken your resolution with respect to the duty of prayer. Your

No. 5. Vol. 11. Y guilt

guilt I doubt not is great. That of every sinner is so. It is so great, that you have yet, notwithstanding all your complaints, but very inadequate conceptions of it. You are concerned too with a Being of unbounded purity and glory. But blessed forever be the name of God, when we approach him, we approach a gracious, a forgiving, as well as a fearful God: a God who will not reject the prayer of the humble. O, my Julia, pray and faint not. Fly into the arms of this best of beings. Go to him as your father. Go with the powerful argument of your guilt. It is the best you can use. Abide under his shadow. It is heaven. Blessed are all they who trust in him. Adieu.

(To be continued.)

FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.
REMARKS ON SILENUS.

(See Vol. I. p. 160.)

Messrs. Editors,

AS a minister of the gospel, I have received it in solemn charge to watch for souls, as one who must give account. One important branch of duty, which this charge has devolved upon me, is, to visit the sick and the dying, and afford them such instruction as their circumstances appear to require. As I was lately meditating on this subject, I was led to inquire, what must be the proper method of treating one, who, on the borders of the grave, and eternity, expresses a strong confidence, that he is prepared for the solemn scenes before him; but who, however, appears to me to be in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, and in the most imminent danger of everlasting destruction. After attending to the subject, for some time, I came to this conclusion, that, in such a case, it must be duty, with tenderness, but with great plainness, to suggest my fears, and the grounds of them; to point out the lost situation of man, by nature; clearly to state the necessity, the nature, and the effects of regeneration; to hold up to view the distinguishing characteristics of a Christian character; to dwell on the danger of being fatally deceived; and to urge it upon the supposed subject of delusion, to examine with diligence, with care, and with fervent prayers for divine direction, whether he were indeed a child of God, and an heir of glory. Having come to this conclusion, I took up the 7th number of your Magazine, and, opening at the 160th page, I cast my eye on the following reflection: "How delusive and dangerous the opiate, which ministers

ters often administer to their people, when, without any discriminating remarks, they call upon them at large to examine whether they are the friends of God!" I read the passage again, and again; and then perused the whole essay. On examination, I found this reflection was made in view of this idea, which Silenus, the writer, had laboured to establish, viz. That "self-examination is not the duty of any unrenewed sinner." It was natural to reflect, if this be so, then I have come to a very erroneous conclusion, on the subject, which I have been contemplating; and, alas, I am one of those preachers, who have often administered this "delusive and dangerous opiate." This led me to review the subject. But, after the most deliberate and careful attention, I could discover no reason for altering my opinion. Sensible, however, that, in this case, I am liable to be influenced by prejudice, and desiring to be set right, if indeed I am wrong, I determined to forward this account, with the subsequent remarks on the Essay of Silenus, for insertion in your Magazine.

It is obvious, that the opinion of Silenus, in view of which he dealt so heavy a blow upon my head, and upon the head of other ministers of the gospel, is supported by these two arguments, and by these only; viz. 1. That self-examination is needless, and useless, to all unrenewed sinners. And 2. That no time is allowed them, for such an employment. It may be useful to expose the fallacy of these arguments, and to show, that self-examination may be an immediate duty, and a duty of much importance, to the unrenewed sinner.

The ground on which Silenus obviously rests his first argument, is this, that the sole object of self-examination is, to ascertain whether one is a Christian; and that an unrenewed sinner may know, that he is not a friend, but an enemy of God, without such examination. Hence it is, that he concludes, that self-examination is needless. This appears, from the cases of the rebellious child, and the blind man, to which he refers for an illustration of his idea. To set aside this argument, it may be observed, that it is not true, that the sole object of self-examination is to ascertain, whether one is a Christian; but that, however, were this admitted, it would not follow, that self-examination is needless, for all unrenewed sinners.

Every one, at all acquainted with mankind, must certainly know, that they are extremely apt to deceive themselves, with respect to their real characters. Though they are generally convinced, that they are sinners, they are far from being convinced, and it is exceedingly difficult to convince them, that they are as guilty and as vile as they really are. Almost all men are deceiving themselves, in this respect; and it must be acknowledged, that it is vastly important, that they should know themselves.

themselves. And how are they to be undeceived? Certainly, by having their attention fixed on the truth. But, how can this be effected, but by leading them to serious and careful self-examination? Surely, not at all. They never will be convinced, in any other way. And, until they are convinced, it is not to be expected, that they will take that place in the dust, which belongs unto them. This, therefore, must be a leading object, with every faithful preacher, to hold up to the view of men their real character, and to lead them to examine, whether this character belongs to them. Indeed, whether they say any thing about self-examination, or not, just so far as they exhibit, and apply the truth, they do what naturally urges them on to such examination, and assists them in it. This is the way, in which the words of the wise prove as goads. It is believed, moreover, that the way, in which the Spirit of God convinces men of sin, is, by leading them to examine the state of their own hearts, and showing them to themselves. If more direct scripture testimony is wanted, in proof of the idea, that it is duty for sinners immediately to examine, and for ministers to urge this upon them, let these two passages be duly considered. *Consider your ways. Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord.* If Silenus is capable of writing a sermon, upon either of these passages, without urging upon sinners the duty of self-examination, it must be confessed he has considerable ingenuity.

But, were it true, that the only object of self-examination is, to ascertain whether one is a Christian, still it would be an immediate duty, of vast importance, to *some* unrenewed sinners. Some such sinners are deceived, and really believe, that they are friends of God. This is evident from scripture, and from what is frequently taking place among ourselves. We often see persons, who have evidently nothing of the spirit of the gospel, indulging a vain confidence, that they are the favourite children of God. Indeed Silenus, in attempting to point out what such a man must do, has virtually acknowledged, that there are such men. Now, is it not of infinite importance to such persons, that they should be undeceived? They are walking, blind-fold, directly to the edge of a precipice, and will they not inevitably fall and perish, unless the bandage be removed from their eyes? But, how is this to be effected? Certainly, by leading them to examine themselves. Unless they can be prevailed on to do this, they will never be undeceived, until their eyes are opened in hell. Indeed, so far as self-examination has for its object, to ascertain whether we are Christians, the duty rests entirely on this ground: *It is possible, and there is reason to fear, that we are not Christians.* For, if any person knows certainly, that he is a Christian, he has no occasion for examining, with a
view

view to this object. In calling upon a number of persons, professing to be Christians, to examine themselves then, how would Silenus discriminate, so as certainly to exclude from the call, every unrenewed sinner? It is evident he could not do it, unless he confined the call to those, who know that they are Christians, and who, therefore, need not examine, in order to determine this question. If he call upon them, under the apprehension, that some of them *may be*, and *probably are* deceived, he will then call upon some, who probably are unrenewed sinners. And this, undoubtedly, is the ground, on which we should exhort to this duty. We know that multitudes are deceived. We fear that this is the case with some of our hearers; for we know, that they, as well as others, are in danger. We therefore call upon all who entertain a hope, to examine carefully. Thus did St. Paul to the Church at Corinth. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith," said he. "Prove your own selves." The apostle evidently feared, that some of these professors were unrenewed sinners. Yet he calls upon them all to examine. And if any of them really were of this character, then he directly called upon some unrenewed sinners to examine. These, too, were the persons, for whose benefit the exhortation was particularly designed. These were the persons, who must be undeceived, or perish with a lie in their right hand. Of all persons in the world, therefore, those who are deceived, have most need to examine. But, possibly, Silenus may still inquire, whether the child, who is spitting in the faces of his parents, need examine whether he is acting a dutiful part? and whether the blind man has any need of examining, whether he can discern objects clearly, when he perceives no light? I answer, if this child is really so deceived, as to believe that he is acting a dutiful part, when spitting in his parents' faces, there is much need of his examining, and correcting the error; and if the man entirely blind, is really so infatuated, as to believe he discerns objects clearly, there is much need of his examining, and being convinced of his error; else he is in danger of stumbling, and breaking his limbs, or his neck. But, if these persons cannot be so deceived, it is easy to see, that the cases were nothing to Silenus' purpose.

But the principal argument of Silenus remains to be examined. This is, that there is no time allowed for the examination in question. I call this his principal argument; because, if this be valid, it will bear him out, though the other prove to be without foundation. For, however necessary this examination may be, still, if there be no time for it, it cannot be duty, and may be dangerous to urge it. This argument, therefore, deserves some attention. It obviously rests on the ground, that self-examination would take up some time, in
which

which the person examining could have no holy exercises. This we learn from Silenus himself. He says, "Instead of urging sinners to examine whether they are not Christians, let us rather urge them to commence Christians, without delay; *for God grants no portion of time for graceless exercises.*" From this it is plain, that he supposes the time which should be employed in self-examination, must be employed in graceless exercises. If this be true, Silenus has established his point. But is it true? It is granted, on all hands, that Christians should examine. But, are Christians, any more than sinners, allowed time for graceless exercises? The truth is, self-examination has no tendency to interrupt, or hinder, holy exercises, in a Christian; nor need it prevent them, for a single moment, in a sinner. A person, who is now in an unrenewed state, may begin to examine himself, and begin to have holy exercises, at the same moment; so he may begin to pray, and to have holy exercises, at the same time. Hence, there is no reason, why they should not be exhorted to examine themselves immediately, or exhorted to pray, or to do any thing else, which is consistent with the exercise of holy affection at all, on account of any want of time. The question is not, whether sinners may examine themselves, continuing at enmity with God, but whether it is their duty to examine themselves immediately. And, that this is duty, and a duty, to which the ministers of the gospel are bound to exhort them, it is believed is made evident. If, however, this view of the subject should appear to be erroneous, it is hoped some person will do me the favour to correct it.

TROPHIMUS.

TRUE LIBERALITY.

IT must have been noticed by every thoughtful person, that in the scriptures, as well as in the writings of uninspired men, the friends of God are denominated by a variety of characteristical epithets. They are called righteous, godly, holy, spiritual, heavenly, humble, faithful, believing, and in one passage of scripture, *liberal*. The passage in which the friends of God are characterized as liberal, is in Isaiah, xxxii. 8. "But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." The same general character is designated under these respective epithets. For there are but two classes of men, those who are for Christ, and those who are against him; those who gather with him, and those who scatter

ter abroad. The epithet liberal has its admirers. It is considered by many as holding up to view the fairest characters in human life ; and, properly understood, it does so. But a misconstruction of scripture sentiment is too often recommended by the charm of words, and the ornaments of rhetoric. Let us not be deluded by sounds. Let us not, blinded by the perversion of language, hazard the inestimably precious interests of eternity by considering that as a qualification for heaven, which cannot conduct us to it ; which in fact may be a total disqualification for its happiness.

The word *liberal* is a good one. It is a word we see, which our English translators of the Bible have thought proper to adopt in their version of this inestimable book. It is necessary that we should have a proper view of its true signification, and of the character which it designates. The passage just recited from the prophet Isaiah, will furnish us with a clue to this discovery. The liberal character is here put in opposition to the churlish character. "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. For the vile person will speak villany, and his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail. The instruments also of the churl are evil ; he deviseth wicked devices, to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right. But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand." Here the liberal character is put in opposition to him who speaketh villany, whose heart works iniquity, who utters error against the Lord, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and who is oppressive towards his poor fellow-creatures. It must then stand for the same thing with genuine benevolence, or a real disinterested goodness of heart, which is diffusively free in acts of the purest kindness towards God and men ; the opposite of that narrow, contracted, self-seeking disposition, by which mere men of the world are actuated. It is the same generous goodness of heart which in its everlasting plenitude fills the unlimited capacities of the Deity ; which has given existence to the works of creation, and presented Jesus himself under the humble and lovely character of one that serveth. It is the moral disposition which the holy angels display when they fly on the friendly errands of their Maker, ministering to the heirs of salvation. It is the basis of the lovely character which prophets, apostles, and martyrs have drawn before our eyes, in the most astonishing, persevering efforts for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world ; good men, who made the greatest personal sacrifices daily, who were willing to spend and be spent for the salvation of the souls of their fellow-creatures. It is the temper

per which the divine law respects, when it requires us to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves. It is a temper of heart which is attached to the greatest public good of the universe, which clings to the happiness of all within its reach, and moves generously on the single scale of the most extensive usefulness. So that the truly liberal character is the really benevolent, the charitable, the generous, the self-denying character, and therefore is the sublimity of the Christian character. The passage which has been drawn into view informs us how this liberality of spirit is expressed. "The liberal *deviseth liberal things*;" he is by no means an inactive man. His liberal disposition is far, very far from being a dormant principle. He is not satisfied with merely escaping overt sins of commission; but is equally solicitous to escape those of omission. To do good is his element, in which his talents are employed and his felicity is found. He *deviseth liberal things*. He does not wait to be bought by a handsome recompense. He does not drag heavily along like a snail in the unwelcome path of duty. He does not stay to be pressed, urged, and overcome by the dint of importunity. He has a principle of action in his own heart. He goes forward in the pleasing work of doing good, prompted, not by the solicitations of others, but by the ardour of his own soul. He *deviseth*. He is beforehand in his contrivances. He explores the sources of usefulness, and the readiest methods of gratifying the noble generosity of his mind. His thoughts are on the wing, his ingenuity is employed, and his influence, his time, his property are consecrated to the business of doing good. What is the *burden* of many others, is his *pleasure*. What is extorted from others, is offered by him without asking. The cause which he knows not he searches out. This noble disposition of his heart produces in him a complete disgust to the pleasures of the world. It guards him against all excess in eating, drinking, sleeping, and every animal indulgence; against loose conversation, frolic and needless expenses, lest they should divert him from what he deems to be the end of his existence, and diminish his capacity of doing good. He *deviseth liberal things*. Liberal things are his chief object; opposite calls are conscientiously refused for the sake of them. Had Job given himself up to luxury and dissipation, had he been an idle man, fond of frolic, ambitious of making an external parade, and exhausting his property to gratify this inclination, he could not justly have said of himself, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness unto me, because I delivered the poor that cried, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me,

me. And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness and it clothed me, my judgment was a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind. Feet was I to the lame. I was father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I break the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." True liberality then is hostile to self-indulgence and to self-elevation. It consults ultimately the claims, the honour, the improvement, the felicity of others. But the nature of true liberality we will farther investigate by inquiring, a little more distinctly, what those liberal things are which it deviseth. It has been suggested that genuine liberality is the benevolent love which the divine law demands. This cannot reasonably be disputed; because the law involves all moral obligation, and respects all righteousness. The summary of this law is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." The numerous precepts found in different parts of the Bible are but the applications of this law to particular cases. All duty and all moral excellence are comprised in it. This law exhibits the proper latitude of real liberality. All the liberality of our blessed Saviour, manifested in his coming into the world, ministering to the bodily and spiritual wants of men, suffering and dying, giving up his own glory, and sacrificing his own repose for their sakes, was upon the scale of this law. And of the same nature, and regulated by the same standard, was the liberality of all his apostles. The things then which the liberal man deviseth are those things, which the divine law, in its spirituality, extent, and in all its applications binds him disinterestedly to regard. According to this everlasting and perfect rule of righteousness, he deviseth in the first place those things which are most honourable to the infinite Majesty of the universe. To be truly liberal is to treat God affectionately and generously. It is not to steal from him his property, rob him of his rights, deny his glories, dispute his decrees, despise his grace, quarrel with his government, and meanly set up a false god before him, preferring, in feeling and practice, the voice of the world to his approbation, its pleasures to his service, and its profits to his glory. It is not to attempt to bend his government and gospel to an accommodation to our pride and partiality to ourselves. It is not to shape our sentiments of God in opposition to what he has told us are his feelings and his purposes, or our lives in opposition to his precepts. This is not to act a liberal part. It is not devising liberal things. It is directly the contrary. To devise liberal things with respect to God, is to treat him on the fair and equal ground of strict propriety. It is to render to God without any stinting or parsimony the things that are God's. It is

No. 5. Vol. II. Z to

to ascribe to him freely and cheerfully all those attributes which compose his most adorable name. It is cheerfully to place him on the throne as the sole governor of the world, whose will is his only law, and whose unquestionable right it is to do his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, disposing of all creatures and events as seems good in his sight. It is to give up the reins of government entirely into his hands, and to acquiesce with perpetual satisfaction and gladness of soul in his supreme and unfrustrable dominion. It is to admit our entire dependence upon him, to subscribe to the rectitude of his law and to the righteousness of its sentence. It is to allow freely that we are as great sinners, and deserve as great a punishment as he has informed us. It is to admit unreservedly that he is right, and that we are wrong, wholly and entirely, with respect to that controversy we have maintained with him, and therefore to give ourselves up into his hands to be saved by his mere grace if we are saved at all. This is but acting according to the dictates of the most evident propriety and truth. To treat God thus, to glorify him as God, and to make him the supreme good, is but to treat him in equity. After we have done this we are but unprofitable servants, doing no more than it was our duty to do. If we come short of this, if we deny to God his attributes, his decrees, his sovereignty, his authority, his right of absolute dominion, his claim to our perfect cordial subjection, if we justify ourselves and condemn him, we cannot be the liberal; for with respect to him, the first and infinitely the greatest object of regard, we do not devise liberal things.

[*To be continued.*]

REFLECTIONS ON AUTUMN.

A THOUSAND circumstances show us the flight of time. The varying seasons are so many monuments to remind us how rapidly it is passing away. They inform us of its departure, yet give it apparently a much longer existence. The different seasons are so many points or divisions from which we take our departure anew.

That season, which in some respects is the most gloomy in the year, is now arrived. The blustering winds, the increasing cold, the leaves of the forest, flying in every direction, broken limbs, and fallen trees, the death of vegetation, and driving storms, tell me in melancholy style that Autumn has come. Labour has carried her scythe and her sickle from the field, the warbling songs of the groves are silent, the ox and the lamb
ask

ask their food from man, children no longer play in the street, amusement and hilarity encircle the social fire. Gone are the flowers of spring, and the herbage of summer; the garden is desolate, and the apple has fallen from the tree. Where is the sprightliness of the vernal morn, where the bustle and business of the summer's day? Gone, gone; by many to be seen no more. No more will they hear the song of the lark, nor the cooing of the dove; no more will they see the rose in the garden, nor the corn in the field. They have seen their last spring, and their last summer.

Is there not an autumn in the life of man? How many can say: "My head is sprinkled with white as the ground with frost, my hairs are falling like leaves from the tree. I have had my spring of pleasure, my summer of labour. They are gone, gone with their various charms, never to be enjoyed again. Not only those amusements that once engaged my warmest affections, yet trifling or criminal in their nature; but other comforts deemed more rational and more permanent, which I trusted would cheer or support me through life, have deserted me one after another in sad succession. My parents, who protected me in danger, who supplied my wants, who were the solace of my life, I have followed to the house appointed for all living. Some of my children, who were the delight of my heart, who slept in my bosom, on whom I leaned as the staff of my age, have been torn from me by the cruel destroyer; they rest in the narrow house of death. My kind brother, my tender sister, I watched in their last moments. The last word, the last anxious gaze, the last gasp of life is still present to my sad remembrance. The scene was dreadful, the distress overwhelming, the anguish of my soul insupportable. I had a friend, who seemed nearer than a brother. He was guilty; my heart bled; I shed tears in secret places; with devotion in my heart, I rebuked him with my tongue, and he has become my enemy. I once fondly hoped to render important services to mankind, but the *hope* is now lost. I received a stranger into my house, and he robbed me. I treated him as a father, and he destroyed my dearest treasure, the reputation of my family. I gave charity to a poor man, and he reproached me for not giving more. I spoke comfortably to the afflicted, and they sighed more bitterly; their complaints were more dismal. I gave instruction to benighted wanderers, and they rushed on more violently in their guilty course. I entreated backsliders to return, and their hatred was terrible. I warned, I threatened the careless and secure with the wrath of God, and the sound of their viol continued through the night.

"Years have chilled the ardour of my spirit; the vigour of health fails; the malignity of disease begins to prey on my vi-
tal

tal powers ; my comforts are falling as apples from the tree ; it is the autumn of my life."

Let all such remember the winter is near, which will not only chill, but freeze the current of life, blast all earthly prospects, and consign them to the dismal tomb, whence there is no return. Let the Christian watch and pray ; his Lord cometh quickly. Let the wicked tremble, and repent, and reform ; the Son of Man cometh in such an hour as ye think not.

EUSEBIUS.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.
GENTLEMEN,

If the following Essay should appear to you calculated to throw light on a subject, which has often been involved in much obscurity, by the ingenuity of able disputants, it is at your service.

ON JUSTIFICATION.

WHOEVER has read the scriptures, with any degree of that attention and care, which their importance demands, must have observed, that there are several distinct things mentioned in them, by which Christians are said to be justified. In Rom. iii. 24, we have these words ; " Being *justified* freely by his grace ;" that is, by the grace of God. In the same epistle, ch. v. ver. 9, we read, " Much more then, being now *justified* by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." The blood, here mentioned, is obviously the blood of Christ. Again, in the 28th verse of the 3d chapter, the apostle says, " We conclude that a man is *justified* by faith." And St James, in his general Epistle, says, ch. ii. ver. 24, " Ye see then how that by works a man is *justified*, and not by faith only." Here, then, are four distinct, and very different things, by each of which believers are said to be justified, viz. The grace of God ; the blood of Christ ; faith ; and works. It must be apparent, that Christians cannot be justified, by each of these things, exactly in the same sense ; and yet, that, according to this plain testimony of scripture, there must be a sense, in which they are as really justified by one of them, as by another. If we can ascertain, in what sense it is, that believers are justified by these things, respectively, it will assist us much in forming correct notions of this interesting subject. And this is what is attempted in the following observations.

In the ordinary sense of the word, as used in law, *justification* is the opposite of *condemnation* ; and is, literally, the act of pronouncing one to be just. Accordingly, we read, " If there be

a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall *justify* the righteous, and *condemn* the wicked." Deut. xxv. 1. And again, "He that *justifieth* the wicked, and he that *condemneth* the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." Prov. xvii. 15. In the cases here brought into view, a man is accused, before a civil tribunal, of some offence. He is arraigned, and tried; and if found innocent, or righteous, is, or at least ought to be, justified by his judge. In relation to this legal justification, several things may be noticed, which may assist in the present inquiry. Particularly,

1. The act, or sentence of the judge, pronouncing a man to be just. "The *judges* shall justify the righteous." That is, they shall pass a sentence of justification, in his favour, or pronounce him to be just. In passing this sentence, it is the judge, who justifieth.

2. The ground, on which the judge proceeds, in pronouncing this sentence. When any one is brought before a judge, to be judged, he is accused of a transgression of some existing law, by which he was bound. In pronouncing him to be just, therefore, the judge proceeds on the ground, that the law is satisfied, as it has been duly honoured, by the accused. On this ground, the judge may be just, in pronouncing this sentence. Here, then, the law justifies the accused, as it bears out the judge in pronouncing him to be just.

3. What has been done, on the part of the accused, to entitle him to such a sentence, in his favour. He has obeyed the law. For obedience is what the law requires, and is the condition, on which it secures an act of justification, in favour of any one, who may be accused of transgression. The language of the law, to every subject, is, "If you yield obedience, and should yet be accused, you shall be acquitted, or justified. If you are disobedient, you may be accused, and shall be condemned." If, then, the accused can make it appear, that he has obeyed the law, the law is satisfied, and the judge proceeds safely. Here, then, the accused is justified, by his own obedience.

4. The witnesses, who testify, in favour of the accused, or the evidence of his innocence. The judge, in passing his sentence, must act in view of evidence. When one is accused, witnesses are brought forward to testify against him; and sometimes, other witnesses testify in his favour. And, when the judge has heard the testimony of all the witnesses, he weighs the evidence, on both sides, and justifies, or condemns, according to what is proved for, or against him. When one is justified, therefore, he is justified by the witnesses; or, rather, by the evidence resulting from their testimony.

Here

Here, then, are four distinct things, by which an accused person, when he is righteously acquitted, may be said to be justified, in a legal sense; viz. The judge, who pronounces the sentence of justification; the law, which is satisfied, and bears out the judge; the obedience of the accused; and the witnesses of this obedience, or the evidence, which they furnish in his favour. It is believed, such an one is justified, by each of these things, in a sense, which is perfectly agreeable to the common language of mankind.

There can be no doubt, but that when the apostles speak of being justified, in the passages, which have been cited, they use the word with some reference to this legal justification. But it must be obvious, that the justification, of which they speak, is, in some respects, a very different act, from the one, to which they thus refer. Legal justification is an act, in favour of one, who is actually just; but gospel justification is an act, in favour of a transgressor. Gospel justification, therefore, cannot consist in actually judging one to be free from transgression, but, in pardoning his sins, delivering him from condemnation, and thus bringing him into a state, as favourable as he would have been in, if he had not transgressed. This act of justification does not pronounce him to be undeserving of punishment; but it delivers him from punishment, which he actually deserves. It does not declare him to be entitled to divine favour, on account of his own perfect obedience; but it secures to him that favour, to which he is not thus entitled. That this is a just idea of gospel justification, is evident, from the plain language of several passages of scripture. Said the apostle Paul, to a congregation of Jews at Antioch, "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*; and, by him, all, who believe, are *justified* from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." He here evidently means the same thing, by *justification*, which he does by *the forgiveness of sins*. So Christ tells us, that he, who believeth on him, is *not condemned*; but he, who believeth not, is *condemned already*. This evidently implies, that those, who believe, are justified, by being delivered from that condemnation, which they were under. Agreeably to this, we read, in another place, that, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath; that is, doubtless, from wrath, to which we were exposed. So that gospel justification cannot be considered as the same judicial act, with a legal justification; but, only as an act, which brings him, in whose favour it is passed, into as favourable a state, as though he were actually just.

But, though gospel justification is a very different act from a legal justification, it is, nevertheless, an act, or sentence of a judge; in passing this act, the judge proceeds on some ground; that

that any one may be entitled to this act in his favour, he must have complied with a certain condition; and it is necessary that there should be evidence of such compliance. It may now be easy to ascertain in what sense Christians are justified, by each of those very different things, mentioned by the apostles, in the passages first brought into view, which will now be attended to, in their order.

1. The first passage mentioned, which is, "Being justified freely by his grace," presents us with the *act of God*, in which he pronounces the believer justified. That is, the act, by which he seals to the believer the pardon of his sins, restores him to favour, and brings him into a situation, in which his final happiness is as certain, as though he were actually just. That justification, in this sense, is the act of God, is plain, from other passages of scripture. Only one will be cited. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is God that justifieth.*" Rom. viii. 33. This justification is an act of mere grace, because the person in whose favour it is passed, has no claim to it, on the grounds of law, but deserves, at the very moment he is justified, to be condemned. Indeed pardon, in its very nature, is an act of grace. It can never be granted to any but the illdeserving. Besides, the grace of God appears in this act, as it is God who has provided a way, in which sinners may be justified, without injury to his character, and the interests of his kingdom: a way, in which we might be "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom *God hath set forth* to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare *his* righteousness for the remission of sins which are past, through the forbearance of God."

2. The next passage, which is, "Much more then, being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him," brings into view *the ground* of this act of grace, which is, the blood, or atonement of Christ. In passing a sentence of legal justification, the judge proceeds on the ground, that the law has been duly honoured, in the person of the accused. But, as gospel justification is an act, in favour of a transgressor, whom the law has condemned, in passing this act, the judge must proceed on different grounds. The transgressor, in his own person, can never make reparation for the injury which he has done. He can never so magnify the law, which he has violated, as to satisfy all its demands against him. But in the room of the sinner, Jesus Christ has magnified the law, and made it honourable; and on the ground of what he has done and suffered, God can consistently with the honour of his government, justify and save the repenting sinner. To lay a foundation for this, was the evident design of the atonement of Christ.

Christ. This the apostle plainly teaches us, where he speaks of Christ, as he "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, *to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins* which are past: To declare, at this time, his righteousness, *that he might be just, and the justifier of him, which believeth in Jesus.*" Rom. iii. 25, 26. That God actually proceeds on this ground, in the justification of the believer, we are taught in the preceding verse. "Being justified freely by his grace." But, on what ground? How can it be consistent with the character of God, and with the interests of his kingdom, to justify a sinner, seeing he deserves to be condemned forever; and since, to justify the wicked is abomination to the Lord? The apostle informs us. He can do it, on the ground of the atonement made by Christ. "Being justified freely by his grace, *through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.*" In other places, we read, "In whom we have redemption, *through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.*" Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. And again, "By him all who believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts xiii. 39. The law of Moses made provision for cleansing from ceremonial pollutions, and for obtaining justification from them; but it made no provision for justification from moral defilement. Hence, David, when mourning over his wickedness, says, "Thou requirest not sacrifice, else would I give it." His meaning must be, that no sacrifices were appointed in the law of Moses, for the expiation of the offences, of which he had been guilty. No foundation was there laid for justification from them. But by the atonement of Christ, a way is opened, in which believers may be justified from *all things*. Wherever it is applied, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all sin.*" 1 John i. 7. Another passage, obviously in point, is, Isaiah liii. 11. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; *for he shall bear their iniquities.*" It is evident, then, that the atonement of Christ is the ground of the believer's justification. In this sense, they are *justified by his blood*.

3. The next passage to be attended to, is, "We conclude, that a man is justified by faith." This, it is supposed, expresses *the condition*, which must be performed, on the part of men, that they may be entitled to this act of justification. That a man may be entitled to a legal justification, he must have performed the condition on which the law proposes to justify him. This condition is, perfect obedience. Hence the apostle says, "The *doers* of the law *shall be justified.*" Rom. ii. 13. Just so, faith is the condition of gospel justification; and he who *believeth* shall be justified. This agrees, both with the tenor of the covenant of grace, and with the direct language of scripture. In the covenant of grace, God, on his part, has promised

ed to bestow pardon and salvation on all, who believe in his Son Jesus Christ. Agreeably to this, we read, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth in him* should not perish, but have everlasting life. John iii. 16. And when Christ, having finished the work of redemption, ascended up on high, he sent forth his apostles to propose this gracious covenant to men, with an assurance, that all, who complied with this condition, should become interested in all its invaluable blessings. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that *believeth*, and is baptized, shall be saved." Mark xvi. 15, 16. Agreeably to this commission, when the convicted jailer came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, with this interesting inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" the apostles replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts xvi. 31. It is supposed, this answer expresses the same idea, exactly, as though it had been in these words; *On condition of your believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, you shall be saved.* It is evident, therefore, that the condition of becoming interested in the blessings promised to men, in the covenant of grace, is *faith*. And the first of these blessings, in order, is, gospel justification. Is not faith, then, the condition of obtaining this justification? But, as has been intimated, the scriptures furnish more direct evidence, that this idea is correct. In the third chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul, having largely proved, that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, very naturally comes to this conclusion, that no man can ever be justified by the works of the law; because no man, who has once sinned, can ever render that perfect obedience, which is the condition, on which the law proposes justification. In view of this, in the verse, which contains the words now under consideration, he says, "Therefore, we conclude, that a man is justified *by faith, without the deeds of the law.*" This seems most obviously to imply, that, as perfect obedience was the condition of legal justification, so faith is the condition of gospel justification. To the same purpose, is Gal. ii. 16. "Knowing that a man is not justified *by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ*, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified *by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law.*" Here, certainly, the faith of Christ, or believing in Christ, is made to stand in the same place in respect to gospel justification, in which the works of the law stand, in a legal justification. Still more plain, if possible, is Rom. iv. 3, 4, 5. "For what faith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now *to him that worketh* is the reward not reckoned of *grace*, but of *debt*. But *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him* No. 5. Vol. II. A A who

who justifieth the ungodly, his *faith is counted for righteousness.*" Certainly, in this passage, faith stands in the same place, with respect to gospel justification, in which perfect righteousness stands, in a legal justification. So that, under the covenant of grace, men are justified by faith, in the same sense, in which, under the law, they might be justified by perfect obedience.

4. It now remains to be shown, in what sense believers are justified by works. Says the apostle, "Ye see then, how that *by works a man is justified*, and not by faith only." From the scope of the apostle's reasoning, it appears evident, that some, among those, to whom he was writing, so perverted the doctrine of justification by faith, as to pretend that a mere assent of the understanding to the truth of the gospel, would entitle them to salvation; though this faith neither involved any right affection of heart, nor produced any good fruit. They had entirely mistaken the nature of a justifying faith. For this is not a dead, but a living, and operative principle. It "*worketh by love, and purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world.*" It must, then, operate powerfully. For the heart, which it purifieth, is full of abominable pollutions, which are not easily done away; and the world, which it overcometh, is a powerful and active enemy, and could never be overcome, but by a powerful and active resistance. The apostle, finding his correspondents labouring under a very dangerous mistake, in one of the most important articles of Christian doctrine, undertook to correct the error. He, therefore, laboured to convince them, that it was as necessary, in order to salvation, that their faith should produce, or be accompanied with good works, as it was that they should have faith. Because, a faith, which is not thus operative, and attended with such evidence, can do no good. "*It is dead, being alone.*" It has not that love at bottom, by which saving faith *worketh*; nor those fruits, which saving faith produces. Hence, he concludes, that, in order to justification, there must be, not merely an assent of the understanding, but a living faith, evidenced by good works. And these works, themselves, justify, as they are *the proper evidence* of the existence of that faith, on condition of which the believer is justified. Such evidence is necessary, and must be exhibited, or he cannot be justified. In a case, where a legal justification is in question, if a man be accused of some offence against the law, perfect obedience to which is the condition of his justification, and there appears to be evidence against him, it can avail him nothing to plead his innocence, or righteousness, unless he can make it *appear*. Unless he *prove* his innocence, he will be condemned. But, if he can bring forward evidence of his righteousness, to destroy the evidence against him, he must be justified. So he, who puts
in

in a claim to gospel justification, must substantiate it by evidence. There is abundant evidence existing, that he *has been* in unbelief; and, unless it be proved, that he *now believes*, by proper evidence, he must still be condemned. This evidence must be found in *good works*; and, if these appear, *by them* he will be justified. That this is the sense, in which the apostle speaks of being justified by works, it is thought will appear plain, if we attend to his reasoning, and illustrations. He says, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him?" That is, can a faith, the existence of which is not proved, save him? "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which they need; what doth it profit?" Here the apostle illustrates his meaning, by bringing into view another Christian grace, viz. Charity. He supposes one, who is in very destitute circumstances, comes to a brother, and begs assistance. And this Christian brother says to the needy suppliant, "I believe you are in want, and I have those feelings which a brother ought to have for you, under these circumstances. *Depart, therefore, in peace; be ye warmed, and filled.* May a kind providence direct your way, where you may be sheltered from the cold, comfortably clothed, and fed to the full." But, notwithstanding all this profession of charitable feelings, he gives him nothing to relieve his wants. Now, says the apostle, "*what does all this profit? What is such charity good for? Is it not evident, indeed, that there is no true charity here?*" And he goes on, "*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*" It is just like this cold or lifeless charity. Again, he says, "*Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble.*" This plainly implies, that there is just as much goodness in this faith of the devils, as there is, in the bare assent of any man to the truth of the same, or any other proposition. "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" That is, Do you need any further evidence, that such a faith as the devils have, can avail you nothing, in the affair of justification? Then look at an example. "Was not Abraham, our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou not how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God." It is thought, that we have here very full evidence of the point in question. "Was not Abraham justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" What had Abraham now done? He had given the most clear and decisive evidence,

evidence of his unshaken confidence in God. This evidence was given by his works, in offering Isaac upon the altar, at the commandment of the Lord. When Abraham and his wife were both far advanced in age, and had no children, God had said unto him, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: And he said unto him, so shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." Gen. xv. 16. Again, God had promised, that, with the very Isaac, whom he was afterwards called to offer upon the altar, he would establish his covenant, and that in him his seed should be called. And he believed God. Even when he was called to offer him in sacrifice upon the altar, he still retained his confidence in the faithfulness of God, and staggered not through unbelief. As saith the apostle, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up his only begotten son; of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure." Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19. Such was the faith of Abraham, on this occasion; and his faith wrought with his works, and by them it was made evident, that he believed God, and trusted in him. In connexion with what was cited above, in the reasoning of the apostle James, concerning Abraham, stand the words under consideration. "Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." And is not the conclusion obvious, that the sense, in which believers are justified by works, is, that their good works are the proper evidence, that they are the subjects of saving faith? One or two other passages of scripture, which support this idea, merit attention. Said our Lord to the Pharisees, "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word, which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For, *by thy words* thou shalt be justified; and *by thy words* thou shalt be condemned." Matt. xiv. 33—37. Nothing can be more evident, than that Christ here considers *words* as evidence of a good, or a bad heart; and that on this account, he says, that *by words* we shall be justified, or condemned. In perfect agreement with this, also, is our Lord's account of the process of the day of judgment. Here he tells us, that when the King shall have gathered all nations before him, and separated his friends from his enemies, placing one

on

on his right hand, and another on his left ; " Then shall he say to those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Mat. xxv. 34, 35, 36. Here, certainly, the good works of the righteous are brought forward, as the evidence of their union to Christ, and their interest in the blessings of his kingdom ; and, by this evidence, they will be justified, in the view of all intelligent beings. So, on the other hand, for want of this evidence, those, on the left hand, will be condemned, as enemies of God.

If the foregoing observations be correct, then, Christians are justified freely by the grace of God, as it is he, who, according to his abundant mercy, pronounces the sentence of justification, in their favour. They are justified, by the blood of Christ, as his atonement is the sole ground of their justification. They are justified by faith, as this is the condition, on which justification and salvation are promised in the gospel. And they are justified by works, as these are the proper evidence of the existence of a justifying, or saving faith.

TROPHIMUS.

EXPERIENCES OF MRS. J. B.

I THINK by what I have experienced from my youth, that I was born into the world in a state of sin and misery. When I was quite young my mother used to teach me to say the Lord's prayer, though I did not know its meaning. If I thought on God at any time, it was in a careless manner ; and oftentimes I took his holy name in vain. I was taught that there was a heaven and a hell, and if I was wicked I must go to hell. When I was eighteen years of age, my father professed to meet with a change of heart, and set up family duties in his house, and used to talk a great deal to me, and try to convince me of the reality of religion. Sometimes I partly believed it, and thought I would never do as I had done. I thought I could be a Christian at any time, but alas I did not know what a sad condition I was in by nature. When I was a little past twenty, I entered into the marriage state, but had not a sense of my condition, till I was twenty nine years of age, at which time, as the Lord would have it, I cast my eyes upon Mr. Whitefield's nine sermons, which were the means under God of opening mine eyes. There seemed to be something in them that drew my attention. I read them very carefully and compared them with the Bible ; there was something that told me, they were the truth ; yet true as I thought them to be, I could not

not bear them. I found that my heart did rise against the truth, and it troubled me to think that I could do nothing towards my own salvation. Alas, I found, notwithstanding all my seeming reformations, I was yet a stranger to the doctrine of free grace. I thought I should be willing to do any thing that lay in my power, if I could but do something towards my salvation. Thus my mind was like the troubled sea, which casteth up mire and dirt. In this condition I remained about eight months. One night I went to bed very heavy hearted, I think more so than usual; I was ready to give up all hopes of ever finding mercy. I thought it was in vain to call upon God for mercy, for he would not hear me; but yet I could not help crying to God for mercy. In the mean time my sleep went from me, and I felt in a sad case; but suddenly I felt a calm in my breast, and these words came as if spoken to me, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart, and give you an heart of flesh." I felt my will subdued and brought into subjection to the will of God. I felt such a love to God and man as I never felt before. I thought I could praise the Lord for his great goodness to me, a poor unworthy, hell-deserving sinner. I continued in a happy state of mind for better than a week; it being about the middle of May, in the thirtieth year of my age; but all at once I got into the dark, in which I wandered through doubts and fears till the next fall, when it pleased the Lord to clear up my evidences and give me such humbling views of his greatness and my own vileness, that ever since I have entertained a hope of the well-being of my soul in my darkest hours; and if I am deceived, the Lord have mercy upon me; but I think that I do sometimes taste that the Lord is gracious. J. B.

District of Maine, Sept. 1804.

FOR THE MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.

"WHAT IS THE CHIEF END OF MAN?"

THIS question respects man's duty: it is the same as asking, What is the great, the chief object which man ought to pursue? In this view, the answer which is taught our children, is very pertinent and instructive: "*The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.*" We have nothing to do which is not comprized in this short sentence. For if we constantly seek the glory of God, we shall perform the whole of our duty. We shall love him supremely; prefer his glory to every other object; and subordinate every private good to the interests of his everlasting kingdom. We shall repent of sin; and both hate and forsake every false way. We shall embrace

brace and delight in Jesus Christ, as the brightness of the Father's glory, and depend entirely on his merits for acceptance with God and eternal life. We shall call on his name, as being the mighty GOD, and through him we shall address the Father, and daily worship the THREE-ONE GOD in spirit and in truth. We shall duly attend on all divine ordinances, and serve and honour God in the various ways he has directed in his word. We shall exercise unconditional submission to his will in all things and with respect to all events, which do, or may take place, being humble and patient, and rejoicing that he is unchangeably the same, that his counsel shall stand, and that he will do all his pleasure. We shall not be idle and slothful, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord in some lawful occupation. We shall feel ourselves to be God's servants, and be concerned to honour him by a faithful discharge of every duty. We shall love all around us impartially, and both pray and labour that they also may glorify and enjoy God.

If we feel and conduct as now described, we shall enjoy God as the only and all-sufficient portion of our souls. We shall behold his glory all around us; and be unspeakably delighted with all the manifestations of himself which are made. While in this world, we shall enjoy his favour and loving kindness. And at death, he will receive us, through boundless grace, to behold his face in righteousness, to be satisfied with his likeness, and enjoy endless felicity in giving glory and praise to his NAME.

No object, but this, to glorify and enjoy God, is worthy our highest pursuit. We exceedingly, yea infinitely debase ourselves in seeking any other object, as our chief end. To live to ourselves, and to seek the honours, riches and pleasures of this world, is conducting very unworthily, very wickedly: it is opposing the authority of the infinite God, and casting awful contempt on his adorable perfections. It is idolatry; it exalts the creature above the glorious Creator.

It is not only a reasonable service, but also an unspeakable privilege, to glorify and enjoy God. Every other pursuit leads to disgrace, disappointment, and misery. But if we pursue this object, we shall arrive at the highest dignity, glory and blessedness of which we are capable. Let every one then seek the glory of God, and the enjoyment of his favour, which is life, and his loving kindness which is better than life. May our youth do this, and renounce vanity and pleasure, which would issue in sorrow, in endless misery.

ORDAINED,

SEPTEMBER 27th, at the west parish in Lynn, successor to the late Rev. Mr. Robe, Rev. William Frothingham. Introductory

ductory prayer by Rev. Mr. Stevens of Stoneham, Sermon by Rev. Mr. Holmes of Cambridge, consecrating prayer by Rev. Dr. Osgood of Medford, charge by Rev. Mr. Clark of Lexington, right hand of fellowship by Rev. Mr. Thatcher of Lynn, concluding prayer by Rev. Mr. Tuckerman of Chelsea.

INSTALLED,

AT Reading, October 17th, 1804, the Rev. Mr. Reuben Emerson. The solemnities were introduced by an anthem. Rev. Mr. Stevens of Stoneham made the first prayer, the Rev. Mr. Sage of Westminster, V. preached from Matt. x. 27, *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light ; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops ;* Rev. Mr. Worcester of Salem made the consecrating prayer ; the charge by the Rev. Mr. Matty of Lynnfield ; the right hand of fellowship by the Rev. Mr. Sanborn of Reading ; the concluding prayer by the Rev. Mr. Green of Malden.

GOD AN ALL-SUFFICIENT PORTION.

(Communicated as an original Female Production.)

IN thy Almighty pow'r I rise,
 Thou Great Supreme, thou only wise.
 Inspir'd by Thee, my soul aspires,
 And glows with heav'n's celestial fires.
 Now let the world indignant rise,
 And tempt me from my native skies ;
 Or let her try her magic art,
 To break the quiet of my heart ;
 The fairest objects cannot move
 My steady affiance, or my love.
 Nor can her gloomy frowning train,
 Of grief, anxiety and pain,
 Excite a panic, or a fear,
 While my Almighty Friend is near.
 Tho' health should fail, tho' friends should prove
 Unkind and cruel for my love :
 'Though ev'ry spring of joy should cease,
 And wrath and discord banish peace,
 Though life should be a source of pain,
 And nought but misery remain ;
 Yet still, in God supremely blest,
 Love, joy and peace should fill my breast.
 The streams may fail, but he'll endure ;
 The fountain still forever sure.
 And when the storm of life is o'er,
 He'll land me on the heav'nly shore ;
 There joys eternal shall repay
 The transient sufferings of a day.
